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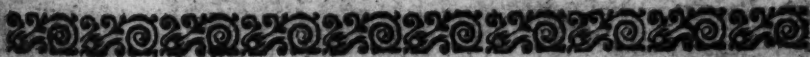
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Affize-Sermon

Preach'd at

Kingston upon Thames,

On Thursday, Aug. 22. 1728.



Price 6d.

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Alice-Semmon

in 1884

Kingdon upon Thomas



On 17th

*National Righteousness, the foundation
of Publick Prosperity, explain'd and
recommended,*

IN A
S E R M O N

Preach'd at the
Assizes held for the County of SURRY,
at *Kingston upon Thames,*

On *Thursday, August 22. 1728.*

Before the Right Honourable the
Lord Chief Justice *ETRE,*

AND
Mr. Baron *HALE.*

~~~~~  
Published at the Request of the High-Sheriff and Grand-Jury,

~~~~~  
By *GEO. STEPHENS, M.A.* Master of the Free-
School in *Guildford*, Rector of *West-Clandon*, and
Chaplain to the Right Honourable *Thomas Lord*
Onslow.
~~~~~

L O N D O N :

Printed for T. COX at the *Lamb* under the *Piazza*  
of the *Royal-Exchange* in *Cornhil.* 1728.



Statistical Rightness, the Foundation  
of Public Prosperity, explained and  
recommended.

IN A  
SERMON

Preached at the  
Altars held for the County of Sussex  
at Kingston upon Thames

On Thursday, August 22. 1728.

Before the Right Honourable the

Lord Chief Justice ERLE.

AND  
MR. BAKER.



Printed at the House of the Bishop of London, and sold by

By Geo. STEPHENS, M.A. Master of the Free  
School in Chichester, Printer to His Majesty, and  
Chaplain to the Right Honourable Thomas Lord  
Oxford.

LONDON:  
Printed for T. Cox at the Lane, under the Prison  
of the Royal Exchange in Cornhill. 1728.



To the Worshipful

*John Wall, Esq;*  
High-Sheriff of the County  
of *SURREY.*

A N D

To the Honoured Gentlemen of the  
**GRAND-JURY,**

*V I Z.*

*Sir Thomas Steavens, Knight.*

*Sir More Mollineux, Knight.*

*The Hon. Richard Onslow, Esq;*

*Nathaniel Roffey,  
Thomas Hucks,  
Samuel Whincopp,  
William Fenew,  
James Clarke,  
Abraham Shard,  
Samuel Palmer,  
Smith Meggott,*

*Esquires.*

*William Welch,  
George Pottinger,  
Thomas Chambers,  
John Bishopp,  
Richard Smith,  
John Hind,  
Thomas Beauvens,  
Thomas Shirley,*

*Gentlemen.*

This **SERMON**, publish'd at your Request, is,  
with all Respect, dedicated by,

**GENTLEMEN,**

*Your most obedient humble Servant*

**GEO. STEPHENS.**

To the Worshipful  
 John Wall, Esq;  
 High-Sheriff of the County  
 of SURRY  
 AND

To the Honoured Gentlemen of the  
 GRAND-JURY  
 VIZ.

|                               |                  |
|-------------------------------|------------------|
| Sir Thomas Steevens, Knight.  | Richard Rogers,  |
| Sir More Mellinex, Knight.    | Thomas Hucks,    |
| The Hon. Richard Onslow, Esq; | Samuel Whitting, |
| William Welch,                | William Peters,  |
| George Pottinger,             | James Clarke,    |
| Thomas Chambers,              | Abraham Spink,   |
| John Bishopp,                 | Samuel Palmer,   |
| Richard Smith,                | Smith Meggott,   |
| John Hind,                    |                  |
| Thomas Beaumont,              |                  |
| Thomas Shirley,               |                  |

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 Your most obedient humble Servant  
 Geo. STEPHENS.



PROVERBS XIV. 34.

*Righteousness exalteth a Nation,  
but Sin is a reproach to  
any People.*



THE chief Inquiry arising from these Words is this ; What we are to understand by *Righteousness* and *Sin*, to which such great and certain, tho' different Effects, are here ascribed. A Speculation by no means in- curious or unuseful, since by this we discover a Remedy for those Evils which every one would seem willing to cure : *Righteousness* being here mark'd out as the Health and Strength of a well-constituted Government, and *Sin* the dangerous Distemper, whose malignity spreads wide, weakens and disorders, and at last proves fatal to the Body Politick.

But



But before I proceed I would make an Observation or two on the Words as they lay before us ; not only the better to comprehend their full sense and meaning, but to engage our Attention and exactness in the Inquiry, to which they lead.

I. *First*, When it is said that *Righteousness exalteth a Nation*, the expression is full and significant, and offers to our Minds an Idea of all the Blessings that can render a People great and glorious. It supposes Unity, Order and Firmness at Home, secured by good and equal Laws, under a wise, vigorous, and steady Administration ; and Abroad, it supposes high Reputation and Credit, proceeding from the fame of Power and Riches, and hence to hold the Balance, and be to others the Arbitrators of Peace and War. Or, in the Scripture-Language, it is to be *God's peculiar People ; to be high above all Nations in Praise, in Name, and in Honour*. For thus Moses encourages the Children of Israel to Obedience, *Deut. xxviii.* from the 1st to the 13th Verse ; where, after enumerating the many Circumstances of publick Prosperity, he adds, *the Lord shall make thee the Head and not the Tail : and, Thou shalt be above only, and Thou shalt not be beneath : if that Thou hearken unto the Commandments of the Lord thy God, which I command Thee this day, to observe, and to do them.*

So, again, When it is affirm'd that *Sin is a reproach to any People*, much more is thereby signified, than at first appears. It does not only mean that Sin is scandalous and matter of Reproach to a Nation, but that it shall actually be followed by Divine Vengeance, and punished with all the Evils and Calamities that a People can apprehend and dread. And that it is usual in Holy Scripture to represent National Judgments by some Circumstance of Reproach, we may observe in the Chapter above cited \*: where, after *Moses* had enlarged on the many Miseries which should befall the *Israelites* upon their Disobedience and Impenitency, he sums up all the Curses so remarkably verified upon them to this very Day, *And thou shalt become an Astonishment, a Proverb, and a By-word among all the Nations whither the Lord shall lead thee.* The Prophet *Jeremiab* in the same Style denounces GOD's Wrath against *Jerusalem* †: *And I will make this City desolate, and an hissing: Every one that passeth thereby shall be astonished and hiss because of the Plagues thereof.* And that Reproach may be understood in so full a Sense as to contain a Compendium of Evils, we have a direct Proof in the Prophet *Daniel* ‖, where

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\* Deut. xxviii. 37.

† Jer. xix. 8.

‖ Dan. xii. 2.

the whole Punishment of the Wicked at the Resurrection is described by *Shame and everlasting Contempt*. And in this the Holy Spirit does not only comply with a Figure of Speech usual to the *Hebrews*, but speaks likewise agreeable to the Sentiments of pure and uncorrupted Nature. For since the sense of Shame is so painful and afflicting to an ingenuous Mind, that it exceeds all the Torments of the Body, so that Punishment is chiefly aggravated by it: And since, of all sorts, that of National Reproach, where every thing generous is not extinguished, pierces deepest and is most provoking; the threatening this as a Punishment may, with great elegancy in an elliptical Language, be chosen to represent all Evils and Inflictions whatsoever, in order to raise our Terror and Apprehension.

II. A *Second* Observation I would make is, concerning the manner whereby *Righteousness* and *Sin* may be conceiv'd to have their different Effects on humane Society: How far these Influences proceed from certain Powers inherent in the Things themselves, or from the immediate Interposition and Direction of Almighty G O D. This Point deserves a thorough Consideration and just Distinction; because a right Notion of it is of great Consequence to Mens moral Conduct of themselves, under an awful sense of Divine Providence;



vidence ; and seems to be much of the same nature with that Question in Philosophy, and to admit of the like Solution, How far certain Qualities imprest on Matter may be supposed to operate of themselves, and to produce necessary Effects?

I am not about to suggest, as if GOD did not act by Second Causes, or that there is not an Order and Dependency between them and their Effects. Doubtless all the Works of GOD in this visible World, are adjusted in exact Weight and Measure, and done in so constant and regular a manner, as if according to fix'd and establish'd Laws. But I would ask the Favourers of the mechanick System, whence arise these Powers and Correspondencies, visible in the several Parts of Matter acting on each other? Are they all proper affections of Matter? Or do they not at times discover Effects superior to, and beyond the combination of such Nature and Qualities?. In Honour to the greatest Philosopher of any Age, who has gone the farthest in calculating the Powers of Matter, and reducing the Laws of Motion to the greatest Certainty, I must observe, that He, with no less Piety than Judgment, leads up our Thoughts to the First Agent or Mover; without whose Concurrence, there could not be any such thing as Gravitation or Attraction, that wonderful and general affection of  

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Matter,

Matter. Here indeed has been the danger of the *mechanical Philosophy*, that by supposing Things to subsist of themselves after their Creation, and being fix'd in such a course and order, it consequentially leaves GOD to be an idle Spectator of his Works, and excludes Him, in some degree, from the immediate Government of the World.

Howbeit, \* *He is not far from every one of us*, as the Apostle teaches the *Athenians*, for in him we live and move and have our being : And it is equally an Act of Almighty Power to uphold all Things in their exact and beautiful Order, as at first to create them and give them an Existence.

To apply this Argumentation to the effects ascribed to *Righteousness* and *Sin*, in the Text. In our Reasonings on this Subject we use such Expressions, that *Righteousness* and *Sin* produce such Effects, or do in their own Nature tend to the Happiness or Misery of Man : and these are true and allowable Assertions, if understood in a sober and qualified Sense. But still, How are they Causes of such Effects ? Are *Righteousness* and *Sin* real Substances or Agents ? In strictness of Reasoning they are only Acts or Habits of  
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\* Acts xvii. 27, 28.

a Moral Agent : And if they are certainly attended with such Consequences, this is owing to the direction of Almighty G O D ; who gives them that Fitness and Disposition, as Means to bring about such Ends ; and to which, when it is agreeable to his Justice and Wisdom, according to the Holiness and Perfection of his Nature, He will concur.

I conceive therefore it would be greatly for the service of Religion, I am sure it tends to give us an awakening and lively Impression of G O D's Providence, and of his more immediate concern in the Issue and Event of Things, to keep close to the Scripture Language, \* *The Lord killeth and maketh alive : He bringeth down to the Grave and bringeth up. The Lord maketh Poor and maketh Rich ; he bringeth low and lifteth up.* Or, to confine my self to Instances of G O D's Providence over Men, as considered in Society : † *I form the Light and create Darkness, I make Peace and create Evil, I the Lord do all these things.* || *Shall there be any Evil in the City, and much rather may we argue Good, and the Lord hath not done it ?*

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\* 1 Sam. ii. 6, 7.    † Isai. xlv. 7.    || Amos iii. 6.



If this was attended to, we could not forget GOD, or ever dare to leave Him out of our Schemes, upon whom the success of every Council depends; who is not confin'd to any particular means to bring about his righteous Ends; and whether he acts by ordinary or extraordinary Methods, they are both alike to Him: And who, perhaps, for *this* very Reason, has placed the knowledge of Natural Causes, as we call them, as well as the chain of his Providence, out of our reach; on purpose to keep us Humble and Dependant. That Events are not in our Power, may hence be collected; since GOD often interposes to cross the Purposes of Men: and then *\* the Race is not to the swift, nor the Battle to the strong, neither Bread to the wise, nor Riches to men of understanding, nor yet Favour to men of skill, but time and chance happeneth to them all.* It seems indeed *Time and Chance* to the Prophane, to those, of whom it may be said, that GOD *is not in all their Thoughts:* But to the Rational and Religious, who carry their Speculations beyond the surface of Things, it appears the acting and disposal of the Supreme Mind; who, as He is present every where,

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\* Eccles. ix. 11.

where, directs all Things both <sup>\*</sup> in the Armies of Heaven, and amongst the Inhabitants of the Earth, with an uncontrollable Power, for none can stay his hand, or say unto him, what dost thou? And this leads me to a

III. *Third Observation*, That when it is said, *Righteousness exalteth* and *Sin is a reproach to a People*, it supposes GOD to proceed after a judicial manner, and as the Sovereign-Governor of the World. For, as GOD superintends all things, and is a Being of infinite Rectitude, He cannot but approve of Virtue and hate Iniquity, and accordingly deal out his Rewards and Punishments. The Case of Men singly consider'd, and as joint Members of some publick Body or Community, differs in this: GOD often reserves them, as Individuals, to a future Judgment in another Life; this present being their Time of Trial and Probation. He may, and often does, suspend the calling them to Account, till the general Day of Retribution, when every inequality of his Providence shall be balanced and adjusted. But Nations will then be dissolved with the Frame of the World; so that whatever justice is administred to

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\* Dan. iv. 35.

to Men, as link'd together in Societies, must be executed forthwith on the Stage of this World, and while the present State of Things subsists. But I need not labour, so plain an Argument, to which the Book of GOD gives so great Confirmation by a whole Series of Providences, which proves, that publick Bodies and Communities of Men have gradually risen and declin'd, and were rewarded or punished in proportion to their Virtue or Wick- edness.

Let us lay together the sum of these Remarks. The first was necessary to give us a Notion of the greatness of the Rewards and Punishments here proposed: The other two, to prove their Certainty; which depends on the Divine Attributes of Holiness, Wisdom, and Justice. So that the Text stands now to be consider'd, not barely as a proverbial Saying, which, it is sufficient if it be found often and for the most part true: But as the general Decree and Ordinance of Heaven, uniformly observed in *ruling the Kingdoms of Men*. It is not so much the Political Reflexion of a wise and great Prince, upon the Rise and Declensions of States and Empires, as the solemn Declaration of the supreme Governor of the World, Published to the Societies of Men, on what Conditions, and by what Means they may intitle themselves to



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to GOD's Blessing and Protection, and avoid His dreadful Anger and Displeasure.

Thus prepared, let us advance to the Inquiry, What *Righteousness* may be supposed to consist in, to which the Promise of so great Reward is annexed; and the Nature of that *Sin*, in it self so Reproachful, and followed with the Judgments of GOD.

I. *Righteousness* is sometimes understood as a distinct and single Virtue, and is the same with Justice, and which must be allowed to be a Virtue of great Eminency and Importance. And the Assertion of my Text would thus be very true, that Justice has an extensive Influence on the Prosperity of a People; the regular and impartial Administration of it shewing a Government Strong and Vigorous, and tending to preserve it so in all its Parts. But altho' this be a good meaning of the Words, yet I Question if it be the entire, the exact meaning of them. For as *Righteousness* is here opposed to *Sin*, \* or Sins in general, so it may properly be consider'd, not as one Virtue, but as all collectively; and supposes either an Agree-  
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\* מַצְדִּיק the Hebrew Word rendred by the Septuagint *ἀναστία*, Sins.

ment with some Rule, or a correspondency with certain moral Perfections.

The Righteousness of a Nation then may be considered in these different Views; either as the excellency of the Laws by which it is governed; or the moral Conduct and Qualities of the Persons of which the Political Body consists.

I. As to the Righteousness of Laws, we have *Moses* thus drawing the Character of the *Jewish* Polity, and founding the Grandeur of that People on this Notion; \* *And what Nation is there so great, that hath Statutes and Judgments so Righteous as all this Law, which I set before thee this day.* The People of *Israel* had the distinguishing Privilege of being govern'd by a Collection of Laws of *GOD's* own appointment: And if we carefully weigh and compare them with the simplicity of those Ages, the situation of the Country, the Temper, the Genius, the Circumstances of that People, and especially the Intention of *GOD* in going to take a Nation to Himself separated from the rest of the World, we must allow that they bear the Marks and Signatures of Divine Wisdom, and deserve the Commendation here  
affix'd

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\* Deut. iv. 8.

affix'd by *Moses*, through whose Hands they were received.

It is true this Constitution was temporary, and proper to that Nation, and the Laws of it were peculiarly calculated for the Happiness of that People under certain Views ; so that they are by no means suited to any other People in different Circumstances ; yet I beg leave to observe the high Opinion which the Compilers of the Laws of *Alfred* had of them, so as to prefix not only the Decalogue, but many of the Judicial kind ; and I think it must be allowed, that, on the account of their divine Original, they will serve to be a Guide to us in forming a Judgment of any Body of Laws, how far they are Righteous, and to point out to us the Excellencies that intitle them to that Character.

I would instance only in one. It is an obvious excellency of the *Jewish* Laws that they were plain and easy, both with regard to their Number and Perspicuity. When Law-Books swell and become voluminous, no wonder the decision of Causes is attended with difficulty and confusion. And, where brevity, as well as correctness, is not strictly observed in composing Laws, there will be room for Perplexity and Uncertainty of Opinion. The Inconveniency of a numerousness of Laws is unavoidably introduced by length of Time and new-arising Exigencies : But



whenever this becomes a Grievance, a Remedy has been mark'd out for us under the direction of a wise *Justinian*. Our Laws underwent several Reviews under our *Saxon* Ancestors ; and since our Constitution is built on their Model, and whatever Liberties we enjoy are in great measure owing to their Wisdom, it may be wish'd that a Prince descended from the *Saxon* Line, would, on some favourable Juncture, enter on this great Task, and restore to us this *Righteousness* as at the beginning : It would, I presume, be no mean addition to the Regal Title, to be stiled, *The Reformer of our Laws*.

It is more within the course of my Inquiry, to proceed to the other Branch of this Head, which was,

2. To consider the Righteousness of a Nation, as a Personal Quality in the Moral and Religious behaviour both of the Governing and Governed.

He must needs be an incurious Observer on the Sacred History who does not discern what a great Blessing a Religious Magistracy was to the People of GOD : And this too in such a manner, and for such Reasons, as are not peculiarly confin'd to the Case of the *Israelites*, but such as extend, and will hold good with regard to every Nation under Heaven.

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The Idea then of a good Governour does not wholly consist in great Abilities, in an extent of Knowledge, in a sagacity or happy skill and address in Business; it comprehends likewise a probity and sanctity of Manners, an exemplary Piety, and a well-temper'd zeal for Religion. And indeed, how do these Qualifications mutually conspire for the Public Good? Those enable and teach how to hold the Reins of Government: The other give a Dignity and Authority to those that hold them. The former supply the utmost assistance of humane Policy: The latter engage Heaven in the Success; for those \* *that honour God, God will honour.* The Favour and Protection of GOD will follow them; and we may then piously presume, that *the work of GOD will prosper in their hands.*

Now, tho' this Truth is always proper to be maintain'd, and is to be oppos'd to any artful Insinuation, as if moral Qualifications were out of the Question, and of little significance; yet will it by no means countenance or justify any Licentiousness in censuring the Lives of our Superiors; whose Characters, as well as Persons, ought, for all the Ends of Government, to be treated as Sacred.

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\* 1 Sam. ii. 30.

I know not how far it may be argued a Privilege, consequential to our *English* Liberties, to sit in Judgment upon, and question the management of our Governours, in which Religion and Prudence teach us great Modesty and Caution: However, *let us not use this Liberty as a cloak of Maliciousness.* For those certainly are Strangers to the Principles and Doctrines of the Gospel, who can allow themselves, on any occasion, to *speakevil of Dignities*, or vilify their Persons, either by open and common Obloquy, or the more cover'd Arts of wicked Slander: *We have not so learned Christ, if so be we have heard the Truth as it is in Jesus: We have no such Custom, nor the Churches of God.*

There will be the less danger of contracting this Guilt, to punish which *the Magistrate ought not to bear the Sword in vain*, if we the Governed would attend to our own private Conduct, as Christian Members of the Community, and the Influence it must have on the general Welfare. The Rule is, \* *ἡσυχάζετε*, to be quiet, † to give no Disturbance, by being busy medlers out of our own Sphere; but to *mind his own business*: A Business that

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\* 1 Thess. iv. 11.

† The primitive Word *ἡσυχάζετε* is interpreted in Hesychius by *ἀπεχέσθαι*, which implies a not meddling out of our own Sphere.



that will afford such ample Matter of Circumspection, Examination, and frequent Research, that will leave us little Leisure, or Inclination, to offend in the Point of factious Censure and Detraction. It will be enough to the sober Christian to regard and watch his own Life, that his Actions and Righteousness be such as may contribute to the Happiness of the Society or Kingdom to which he belongs, and the seeking whose Welfare, within his proper Station, ought never to be absent from his Mind.

The Principles of Honour and Conscience so much in the Mouths of Men, if not deduced from and founded in revealed Religion, must needs be vain, uncertain, and precarious; and a greater Degree of Righteousness is expected from Christians, who are supposed to act on surer Grounds, and under a stricter Direction, than the Heathens; how much soever they, to our Shame, may seem to have excell'd in some Instances of the social Virtues; if they have indeed excell'd us.

In the antient Apologies for Christianity, it is constantly insisted on, that no other System of Religion ever had that friendly Aspect on the well-being of human Society, as the Doctrines of the Gospel. And if we descend to a particular View of its several Precepts, it will appear that this Godliness is

is indeed profitable *for the life that now is, as well as for that which is to come.* Temperance and Purity, Justice, Truth and Fidelity, Diligence in our Callings, Peaceableness and Subjection, are, if I may so speak, the common Duties of the Gospel. It moreover inspires its Professors with the most generous and diffusive Sentiments, by recommending an ardent, extensive, and disinterested Charity. It removes all Envyings and ambitious Emulations, which are the constant Disturbers of Peace and Order, by strongly enjoining Humility and Self-denial. It moderates our Love and Passion for the World, the great Prize of Contention, by proposing a nobler Object of our Affections. It secures our just Obedience, by tying it down on the Conscience, and requiring it of all, \* *for the Lord's sake*, as to his Minister, and cloath'd with his Authority. So true is it that a Christian, if he liv'd up to these Principles, and walk'd worthily in the Vocation wherein he is call'd, would approve himself, beyond all question, the best, the most useful and loyal Subject; and an amiable Pattern of that *Righteousness* which alone can *exalt a Nation.*

What

What has been advanced under this Head will make any enlargement under the Second less necessary; which was to enquire,

II. What that *Sin* is, which, reproachful in itself, will bring down the Divine Displeasure on a People.

Sin being a Deviation from the Rule of Righteousness, by applying this Rule we soon discover any Defect or Enormity. And were we to bring this Reflexion home to our selves, it might furnish too large occasion to those who love to be Clamorous on the Depravity of the Age; either out of a censorious Humour, or chiefly to gratify their Spleen and Disappointment. Satyrical Invectives have not always proceeded from an upright concern for, or a strict adherence to Virtue: Pride, Ill-nature, and Vainglory have not seldom had their share in giving a keenness of Edge this Way. The Vices of the *Roman* People were never exposed in stronger Colours than by the Historian *Sallust*; and yet his Cotemporaries have left us but unfavourable Impressions of his Character; and his Style is plainly that of an angry Man. The Prophets indeed of the Old Testament shew a warm Zeal in bearing their Testimony against the Sins of the *Jewish* Nation, and freely denounce the Divine Judgments: But their Commission is a Sanction to what they  
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ſpeak, and we are ſure the Corruptions complain'd of were not aggravated, becauſe they were guided by the Spirit of God.

I urge not this by way of Excuse or Extenuation, as if we either had reaſon to boaſt of our ſelves as to the State of Morality and Religion amongſt us, or were free from Blame. I am ſure we are not ſo Good and Holy as we ought to be; as the many great Bleſſings and Favours we enjoy require of us. Charity however, or it may be a partial Love to my Country, tempts me to hope that things are not ſo bad as ſome would repreſent; whoſe gloomy Minds, through an injudicious, yet well-meaning Zeal, are ever ominating Evils; and are too often practiſed upon by the diſaffected to our Eſtabliſhment; who therefore delight in Complaints, and aggravate every Miſcarriage, becauſe out of deſperation they wiſh to ſee us unhinged and flung into Confuſion.

Still, I fear, there is too much to be laid to our Charge; if complaining may be thought to lead the way to a Reformation. Let us look back, to the Date of the glorious and ever-memorable Revolution, when we were delivered, by a great Deliverance, from the imminent Danger of Popiſh Superſtition and Arbitrary Power. Do we keep a wakeful and jealous Eye on all the Workings and Tendencies of that deteſted Superſtition? Or  
have

have we made a due Use of that noble Plan of Liberty which was then mark'd out for us by our great Deliverer? Are we not sinking into a strange supineness and indifference for Religion, from which, I fear, nothing but a Persecution or severe Judgment of GOD is likely to awaken us?

We hear much of a Love of Truth, and we see great Improvements in all Parts of human Literature, and I may venture to say that no Protestant Nation enjoys, with like Advantage, the natural Right of Mankind, a true Inquiry and Examination. But have our Morals kept pace and been equally improved? Is not Religion rather become a cold Speculation and Entertainment than our serious Practice and Concern?

When was there ever such an Inundation of loose, profane, and blasphemous Books? Far be it from me to call out to the Civil Power to restrain the Liberty of the Press; It is necessary to a Free-people: but I may say that the wanton, the ludicrous, the virulent Manner wherewith things High and Sacred have been treated amongst us, beyond all Bounds of Reason and Decency, is altogether immoral, and makes one wish that an Expedient might be found out to put a stop to the one, and not abridge the other.

But I willingly check my self, remembering the Observation of \* *Livy*, *Querelæ ne tum grata futura, quum forsitan & necessaria erunt.* Complaints will not be grateful, when at the same Time perhaps but too necessary. And indeed it would look like disaffection to indulge them at the beginning of the auspicious Reign of our gracious Prince; who is possess'd of all the Qualities that can endear Him to His Subjects, and raise our Expectation of publick Prosperity. Especially when we see at the same Time the Royal Partner of the Throne shining with such distinguishing Piety and Virtue, as must needs warm into Imitation all within the Influence of Her great Example; and might place Her at the Head of those Ten Righteous, for whose sake GOD, we hope, would avert his impending Judgments, and spare a more profligate People.

To close then this Discourse. I am now addressing my self to those whose generous Birth and Education, whose Interests and Figure in their Country, make them more nearly concern'd in the Consequence, and therefore may well dispose them to let the Argument I am upon have its

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\* *Livy's Preface to his History.*



its full Force and Efficacy. Permit me to urge it in the solemn and apposite Words of the Prophet *Samuel*. \* *Only fear the Lord, and serve him in Truth with all your heart: for consider how great things he hath done for you.*

Are your Hearts full of Loyalty to our Great and Gracious Prince, whom the good Providence of GOD has placed over us? (And surely never any more merited the Hearts of all His Subjects) *Behold the King whom ye have desired, whom ye have chosen.* Behold Him, by a wise and just Administration, dealing out to His People Wealth and Peace, and securing us in the Enjoyment of our Liberties and legal Rights. Behold Him surrounded by an happy and numerous Issue, delivering us from the apprehensions of a Doubtful and Popish Succession, and giving us so many Pledges of a Protestant Settlement to distant Posterity. Even all these Blessings, all this Glory, depends on our National Righteousness. For as the Prophet goes on to warn us, and who without trembling can hear the fatal Effects of disloyal and traiterous Sin? *If we go on to do wickedly we shall be consumed both we and our King.*

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\* 1 Sam. xii. 24.

Do we boast our selves of our *Sion*, to use the figurative Language of the Scripture, *the Perfection of Beauty, the joy of the whole Earth?* Do we go about *admiring its Bulwarks and telling the Towers thereof?* If we are unfruitful under these Advantages; if we are not built up in our *Holy Faith, elect and precious, meet for the Master's Work*; this fair and costly Structure will soon be unjointed and dissolved, and *Jerusalem become an heap of Stones.*

Do we esteem our selves happy in some Advantages of our Clime and Situation; and much more so in our well-temper'd Constitution and Legal Government? \* *A fruitful Land God maketh barren, for the wickedness of them that dwell therein*; and since a Government always degenerates with a People, our Liberties may by this means sink into Oppression, or what is worse, Licentiousness.

The present Solemnity suggests one Argument more. An Argument, that will give weight to all the rest. An Argument that is well urged by our Church, when it directs us to pray, *That every one in their several Stations may serve painfully and faithfully to the Publick Good, as well as GOD's Glory, remembering the*

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\* Psalm. 107. 34.

*the strict Account they must all one Day make. A Day, when You, my Lords, must be judged: When we must all appear before the supreme Tribunal of Christ, to give an account, not only of what we have done in the Body, but as Members of that Body in which we are placed.*

*In a Word. As Government is founded in Religion, so it is that, which can alone be its Strength and Stability. It is by Religion that every righteous Man best contributes his Endeavours for the Publick Good; and if, through the Tide of Wickedness, these are render'd ineffectual. It will Support and Comfort him, till he arrives at that Place where dwells Righteousness; when he shall with full and joyous Conviction acknowledge \* *Verily there is a Reward for the Righteous; there is a GOD that judgeth in the Earth.**

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\* Psalm lviii. 11.

**F I N I S.**

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**E R R A T A.**

Page 10. line 20. read *which is* instead of *which, it is.*



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